

THE QUAKER

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"I only know that somebody came in haste from Florence."—See page 200.

ALEXANDER SMITH.

"LAST things" have always a tender and melancholy interest; and when it is death that has closed a series of accustomed and expected acts, the last becomes inexpressibly sad and

sacred. One of these "last things" is the beautiful "Autumn Homily" which appeared in these pages on the 1st of December, 1866, from the pen of Alexander Smith. He died on the 5th

of January, having just entered on his thirty-seventh year. One reads the simple little homily now with deeper feeling; and therefore it gives out a deeper meaning. With almost startling distinctness it wears the features of his mind, and marks the design of his life. He is discoursing on autumn, and the time of life which it represents—a favourite subject with him. He delights in the season—in its bounty, its fulfilment, its repose. He holds its counterpart in human life happier than youth with its hopes, and better than manhood with its toils. He paints just such an age as might have been his own—such an autumn as might have been confidently predicted for his spring of promise and his summer of steady sunshine; for his work was done in the sunshine of a serene temper and an affectionate heart. But for him there is no harvest, and no winter. We can but gather the summer fruits of a mind which was ripening to the last. Those who knew him best owned that there was more in him than he ever expressed, of which they caught mere glimpses, and that he expressed more of his poetic nature in the intercourse of friendship than in anything he ever wrote. He had a humour behind which there always seemed a depth of pathos which was not uttered, and a pathetic tenderness through which there was ever ready to break the smile of a happy humour, and neither of these was ever fully translated by his pen. Neither did these qualities appear to the outer world, in which he moved a man much given to silence, of quick observation, and quiet unobtrusive manners, the very embodiment of common sense.

In 1852 the publication of the "Life Drama" created "a sensation" in literary circles, and called its youthful author at once out of obscurity into fame. It had been written several years earlier, in the leisure afforded by his profession, that of a pattern-designer, and, as the work of a mere lad, was, and is, one of the most remarkable productions of genius. Every paper had its article headed "The New Poet." His work was loaded with extravagant praise. He himself was everywhere welcomed, flattered, and caressed. Those who knew him in these early days can bear witness with what gentle dignity and perfect modesty he met the storm of applause. He would submit to be lionised a little, with the amused air of a good-tempered man assailed by a troop of children, who want to finger his clothes and look at his watch. To the writer of this paper he would sometimes say, with the same amused air, as if he were a mere observer, "I shall have to pay for this"—meaning the extravagant praise. "They" (the critics) "will lash me yet." He knew that they were praising him in the wrong place, and for the wrong qualities—for the qualities which would pass away as his mind matured.

And when his words came true, and undue depreciation followed unbounded laudation, he held on his way with the same self-respecting and manly dignity. He was not indifferent. He could weigh and give heed to discriminating criticism, even when adverse. He was not callous even to that which was unworthy; for he was void of contempt, and of the mockery which is "the fume of little minds." But, though contemptuous words might sting him, the sweetness of his nature healed the wound at once: it never rankled.

In his domestic relations he was beyond all praise. As son and brother, as husband and father, he left no claim on his duty and affection unsatisfied. He did not think that for the sake of a divine gift he might neglect a common need, and hence a life without reproach or stain, and as nearly approaching the perfection of dutifulness as man's life may. In 1858 he married Miss Flora Macdonald, the daughter of Captain Macdonald, of Ord, in the Isle of Skye, who was buried on the same day as his son-in-law; thus leaving the daughter and wife doubly bereaved. With her sorrow, in the midst of her little ones, it is not for the stranger to intermeddle.

Above all, Alexander Smith had the faculty of friendship. He made friends, and he kept them to the end. He did not pick up people and drop them again, as the fashion is in our busy time, as if life were a railway journey, and his companions fellow-travellers for a single stage. These friendships of his were something old-fashioned and idyllic as the loves of David and Jonathan. His chivalrous admiration comes out in his appreciative criticism of his fellow-poet, Sydney Dobell. In 1854 they published a volume of sonnets together, not distinguishing their separate work; and twelve years later, Mr. Smith is pleading fervently with a disregarding public in favour of his friend. Another friend, of thirteen years' standing, who can say that he opened to him his whole mind, writes:—"His was a heart very pure and simple, and I cannot hope to have such communion with the like again." And as his heart was so was his life, and so also is his work.

Of his industry he has left ample evidence. In 1854, appointed Secretary to the University of Edinburgh, he discharged the duties of that office with scrupulous faithfulness. It has been said that these duties were far from heavy, but they had gradually increased, without bringing any increase of remuneration, and, occupying him from ten to four daily, only gave him £200 a year. All that he did, he did when the work of the day was over, or when other men were making holiday. To take his prose-writing first: he was a constant contributor to one or two papers, and to several magazines. In 1863 he produced a charming volume of essays, entitled "Dreamthorp," full

of quiet, reflective, dreamy poetry. In 1865 he brought out an edition of Burns, with a memoir of the poet, which is one of the best things he ever wrote; and, in the same year, two bulky volumes of sketches, called "A Summer in Skye." From these sketches his power as a prose-writer may best be estimated; and the estimate will be a very high one. For clearness of outline and delicacy of colour his scene-painting could hardly be surpassed, and some of his portraits—such as Father M'Crimmon, the landlord, and McLan—live in the memory like people one has known. His style is subdued and yet imaginative, and the rhythm of his sentences as musical as verse. In 1866 he published a novel, "Alfred Haggart's Household." The first volume of this domestic story is the best; the second was written in illness, and under the pressure of overwork. Destitute of plot, and with the very scantiest materials—an ordinary young couple, who have made an improvident marriage, and are rather perplexed for ways and means, and their two very ordinary children—its interest depends entirely on the charm of its style and its simple fidelity to nature; and—especially in the first volume—these will be found more than sufficient to delight any reader whose taste is not depraved by the craving for sensation.

Alexander Smith has left us three volumes of poetry, with popularity curiously the inverse of their worth. The "Life Drama" was overlaid with an imagery brilliant to extravagance, and which, to a great extent concealed its finer qualities. The "City Poems," which followed, in 1857, and fell comparatively flat, were much more sober in tone and colour, but showed far higher and more various power, and deeper insight into character and the play of human motives and passions. In these poems his unlimited word-power, was placed under due restraint. He had set himself not to utter fine sounding things that signified nothing, but to subdue his language, and exalt his thought. "Edwin of Deira," his last and least known, and least valued work, is his best. He laboured at it for four years; had laboured at it for two before the "Idylls of the King" were heard of, and yet when the work of the laureate appeared, it was still unfinished: he had other work to do. When it did appear, it was set down as a mere imitation, and on the surface the resemblance is remarkable enough to justify the mistake. In the "Idylls," the music of Tennyson's verse reaches its perfection, and the verse of "Edwin" is almost equally melodious, and with the same pauses and cadences. That he admired Tennyson, and, to some extent, made him his model, is no doubt true; but he reached his own measure of excellence by an independent movement in the same direction, rather than by following his master. The unlikeness of "Edwin

of Deira" to the "Idylls of the King," leaving quality out of the question, is far deeper than the outward resemblance. The greater poet, aiming at little, accomplished all his aim. The younger and lesser poet aimed far too high, and accomplished but little of his loftier purpose. A tale of happy and a tale of disappointed love; a court intrigue; a tragic passion and destiny, are the materials of the "Idylls." No less a theme than the introduction of Christianity into England is the leading subject-matter of "Edwin." Of course, the choice of a lofty theme may signify nothing but supreme self-conceit. Such themes are handled and profaned by folly every day. That "fools rush in where angels fear to tread" has passed into the stalest of proverbs; but the execution of this poem, though it does not fulfil, amply justifies the purpose of its writer. In it the last trace of extravagance disappears, and gives place to a purity and simplicity of diction worthy of his subject and his thought. A slight account of the poem will not be out of place. Edwin, the son of Egbert, seeks shelter at the court of Redwald, the friend of his father, and like him, one of the Saxon kings, after having suffered defeat by Ethelbert.

"Fallen low,
I see a new proportion in the world,"

says Edwin, relating his misfortunes, in words, giving a volume of meaning in a flash of thought. Redwald has seven sons; the flower and first-born, Regner, forms a sudden friendship for Edwin—

"The noble love that lives in noble men."

They dream together of being great kings, "giving peace" and "raising men." One fair daughter has Redwald also, whose eyes "seem to look through the surfaces of things," and for her Edwin conceives a passion, which, in his fallen fortunes, "seems unnatural as winter breeding roses." In the midst of a stag-hunt, which has swept on and left Bertha with Edwin, a little out of sight, the unexpected solitude surprises Edwin into uttering his love. The scene, amid the murmuring wood, where he kisses her hand while she sits,

"Blinded and crimson as the opening rose,
And every leaf seemed watchful eye and ear,"

is full of the most delicate charm of fancy and feeling. Then Ethelbert, hearing where his defeated foe has found refuge, threatens Redwald with war, but offers, if he will deliver up Edwin, to share with him the dismembered kingdom. While his fate is being determined within the palace, Edwin, aware of what is going on, and more than doubtful of the issue, is seated on a stone, a bow-shot from the gate, when a stranger comes to him, and acquaints him with his future success, laying on him a sign by which he is to

know him again—the sign of the cross. In the meantime, Bertha's tears and entreaties overcome the caution of her father, and the messenger of Ethelbert is sent away in wrath. Then follows the open declaration of Edwin's love, and his betrothal to Bertha, before the hosts of Redwald, headed by Regner, set out to war with Ethelbert. All the brothers go with the army, leaving the old king and Bertha to wait for tidings. At length the tidings come—the field is won; but the flower of the host has perished. Regner is dead.

"The long day waned,

And, at the mournful setting of the sun,
Up through the valley came the saddened files,
With Regner's body borne on levelled spears;
And, when they laid the piteous burden down
Within the gate, with a most bitter cry
The loose-haired Bertha on it flung herself,
And strove in sorrow's passionate unbelief
To kiss dead lips to life. The sternest lids
Were wet with pity then. But when the king
Was, like a child, led up to see his son
With sense of woe in woe's own greatness drowned,
With some obscure instinct of reverence
For sorrow sadder than any crown
The weeping people stood round hushed as death."

As picturesque as the above is pathetic is the return of Edwin to his ruined city, in the rebuilding of which he makes the first axe ring. The people, following their king, fall to work like ants and repair the destruction into which the invader had trampled their homes. In less than two months the town is rebuilt, with the palace in the midst of it. And then, when Regner's grave

"Had grown a portion of the accustomed world,"

Edwin goes to bring his bride. The parting and the welcome are both fine pieces of imaginative description. Deira empties itself to meet Bertha, the people spreading "thick as daisies" over the fields through which she has to pass into the town. Their domestic happiness; the birth of their child; the wise and gracious and severe rule of the king, and his sickness under a wound inflicted by a traitor, prepare the way for the reception which he gives to the Christian missionaries from Rome, with the result of his own baptism, and that of his whole people. At the close, there is hardly the same proportion kept between the purpose of the story and its actors. We hear too little of Bertha and her boy; too little even of the king. He is mixed up with the mass in the sudden conversion. Those who read the poem to its close, unless they read it for the purpose of criticism alone, long as it is, will wish it had been longer—that it had developed into the true epic proportions to which its outlines point. But then those who read epic poems to the end, and for their own sakes, are in a sad minority, and "Edwin of Deira" shorn as it is—an epic made easy—will never be widely popular. Its writer did not reach the rank of the genius that commands the world, and only the genuine lovers of poetry can yield admiration to humbler though not less valid claims. Among such this last poem of Alexander Smith will yet be valued at its true worth as one of the purest, sweetest, and loftiest productions of its day.

ISA CRAIG.

FOUND AT LAST.

FIt was about nine or ten months since that I had met Laurence Thornton at Nice—or, rather, found him, for at that time he was extremely weak, having just recovered from a very severe illness. A valetudinarian is not the most pleasant companion that one can have; but I did my best to overcome selfishness in the matter. So I offered him whatever assistance I could give, which he joyfully accepted, in no way liking to be under the surveillance of a French nurse. He seemed to be a very strange fellow; and all that I then knew of him was that he had been travelling, and had fallen sick at Nice, when just on the point of starting for England. He was reserved, too, as to his past life, but in other respects he was extremely agreeable, with rather a *distingué* appearance, and decidedly handsome. As soon as he was able to move about, we set out for England, at his desire. It was altogether contrary to his physician's advice; but his eagerness to get to our native country overcame all obstacles.

Arrived in England, we had been riding all the morning, a very sultry day.

"We'll take up our quarters at the next place we come to—eh?" asked my friend Thornton.

"Certainly, if you wish. You look rather knocked up. It seemed very foolish to me to think of riding this distance, in your weak state."

"I shall be all right after a good night's rest; and we'll finish our journey by to-morrow."

"I say, Harrington, don't you think me a very queer fish?" he asked, after some little time.

"Well," said I, humouring him, "you would be a very proper sort of fish if you would only put away your despondency, and—"

"I can't help it," he said, almost angrily; "the Fates are against me!"

"I never met a coward yet but he put everything that went wrong on the heads of those mythical Fates."

"Well, what is it that plucks their dearest objects from the hands of men, just as they are about to seize on them?"

"Their own folly and indolence often," I answered, drawing a bow at a venture; "the hand of God often."

"Can't see it," he said, shortly.

"You haven't told me anything of your affairs, Thornton; but, look here. If you had a little child to take care of, and you saw it rushing greedily after all sorts of hurtful things, or taking good things from your hands with an utter disregard of you, how would you act towards it?"

"Well, I'd—I'd—but let me think about it."

With that we came to the village of —. We put up at the only inn the place boasted of, Thornton feeling much too unwell to proceed any farther. After dinner he retired "to roost," as he termed it, but it being then only six o'clock, I felt no inclination to follow his example. I inquired if there were any scenery or anything of interest about the village that I could go and look at. Mine hostess asked the stable-boy, but that sleepy-looking individual only muttered something about a sow which had a prodigious number of little pigs.

I had sauntered some distance, musing on my friend Thornton and the strange sadness which seemed to possess him, when my attention was struck by a very pretty house. Examining it more closely, the house seemed to be uninhabited, so I advanced up the gravel walk leading to the hall door and rang the bell.

"I am exceedingly sorry to trouble you. Anybody living here?"

"No, sir."

"Whom does this house belong to, may I ask?"

"To Mrs. Overbury, sir; but she's been gone to Florence for the last six months," the housekeeper answered.

"Oh, thank you. The house merely struck me as being very pretty, so I—" I did not know exactly what to say.

"Yes, sir; I believe it is considered very pretty—the prettiest about here—would you like to see the garden, sir?" she asked.

I followed her to the back of the house, where the garden, I supposed, was situated.

"Has Mrs. Overbury been here long?" I asked.

"About a year come next September, sir. She took a great objection to the other house on account of master dying there," replied my friend the housekeeper.

"Oh, then Mr. Overbury's dead."

"Yes, sir, I'm sorry to say, for a kinder master never breathed."

"Mind you don't tread upon that plant down there, sir; Miss Clara would be in a rare state if it was broken."

"I suppose Miss Clara is Mrs. Overbury's daughter?"

"Yes, sir, she is. Maybe you would like to step in and have a look at the house?"

We came into the library, and I was looking at the picture of a very beautiful girl.

"That's Miss Clara; don't you think she's very pretty, sir?"

"Yes, exceedingly; and how old is Miss Clara?"

"Let me see: she was twenty last May. She spent her birthday at Florence. I was very disappointed, for you may think it rather strange, sir, but ever since she was ten years old I've made her a cake on her birthday. I didn't last time; but no matter, for the doctor said it would do her good."

"What, the cake?"

"Not the cake, sir; I wasn't thinking about the cake, but about her having to go to Florence."

"Why, is she ill?"

"Well, sir, it's more the fear of her being ill; she has had a great deal of trouble."

"Indeed! she seems rather young to have trouble. If I'm not impertinent in asking—"

"Oh, not at all, sir," she said; "only, you see, it's rather a family affair, and I should not like it to get to Mrs. Overbury's ears that I had been saying anything about it. If you would not mention it again—" and she looked askance.

"Certainly not, my good woman."

"Will you take a seat, sir? for it's a long story, and you must be tired if you have walked all the way from the 'Black Lion.'

"It's no good my saying Miss Clara is very beautiful, for you can see for yourself," my garrulous friend commenced. "She had a great many admirers, and well she might have, and among them was Mr. Winfred, the youngest son of Sir Charles Manvers. He was not over rich, being the youngest son; but, nevertheless, we could all see that Miss Clara was very much in love with him. He had proposed to my young lady, and she had accepted him; but he kept waiting and dawdling about a month after, half afraid to ask Mr. Overbury's consent to their marriage, for she was a great heiress, and Mr. Overbury expected her to make a high match. At length he did, when, as feared, Mr. Overbury refused him, and, after some angry words, forbade him to enter his house again.

"We were all very fond of Mr. Winfred, and sorry that he and the master had disagreed. Miss Clara, too, would cry very much about it; and she became very sad, poor thing; but it was no good to speak to Mr. Overbury, for he was always a very determined man. She used to have letters from Mr. Winfred every now and then, but that was not much consolation for the poor young lady. About a month after Mr. Winfred's quarrel with Mr. Overbury, he met Miss Clara out with her maid, and after that they generally used to meet three or four times a week. He was too honour-

able to think of asking her to run away, or marry him against her father's express commands."

"But was Mr. Manvers' poverty the only reason why Mr. Overbury refused him?"

"So Mr. Overbury said; but we all thought he had some other. Well, my young lady used to meet Mr. Winfred, but that did not last long, for, by some chance or other, Mr. Overbury found it out. The consequence was, that Miss Clara was sent to her aunt, where she remained about four months, when, at her request, she was allowed to come home again. Well, sir, it so happened that Mr. Winfred knew when Miss Clara came back, for, about a week after, he sent a note by a boy to my young lady, with directions to give it to her maid; but Mr. Overbury, seeing the boy, asked him what he wanted. The boy, I suppose, not knowing what to do, gave him the note. You may imagine his rage when he found out that it was from Mr. Winfred, and, furthermore, that it was to ask Miss Clara to meet him at some place—I forget the name of it—"

"Never mind—go on."

"Well, Mr. Overbury went in a great passion to his daughter's room, and asked her if she knew anything about the note, or whether she had been corresponding with that rascal. The poor girl had nothing to say. Mr. Overbury went out, no doubt, as we expected, to meet Mr. Winfred. About two hours after, he returned, very pale and much exhausted, it seems. From that time nothing more was heard of Mr. Winfred, and it was believed that Mr. Overbury had—had murdered him. Sir Charles Manvers made a great fuss about it, and had some detectives down from London; but all they could do they could not find Mr. Winfred. Mr. Overbury was arrested for the murder, but, there being no evidence to prove it against him, he was acquitted. From the day of the trial he was quite an altered man; and well he might be—for all the gentry about became very cold to him, and they would not visit him if they could avoid it. All believed that he had done the murder, although he was acquitted. He soon became very ill, and many of the London doctors came down, but they gave little hopes of his recovery. He had been too much worried about Mr. Winfred's affair, and that, together with the unpleasantness after, caused his illness, and, in a little time, his death. Mrs. Overbury and Miss Clara were dreadfully cut up, for so kind-hearted a gentleman never lived—more especially Miss Clara, for she had lost both father and lover. In a little time she became almost as thin as a skeleton; consequently Mrs. Overbury was extremely anxious about her. The physician advised Mrs. Overbury to move entirely away from the place, and so we came here; but that seemed to do no good. A warmer cli-

mate was then proposed, and they went to Florence, where I hear Miss Clara is already recovering, and nearly well by this time, I should think."

"Thank you, my good woman;" and I gave her something more substantial.

The next morning we set out again, Thornton, notwithstanding his weakness, rode on, only consenting to stop once in the middle of the day, to get some luncheon. I noticed how eager he seemed to be, not delaying a minute, if possible, which I construed into his impatience to see his friends. He called me a "lazy dog," in his good-humoured manner; so what could I do but drag my weary body after him?

Towards the end of the afternoon we arrived at A—. Contrary to all my friend's former impatience, we put up at the inn there.

"You don't mind me leaving you here for half an hour, or so? I have given directions to your servant to see to the horses; so you've only to change your things, and we'll drive over." And with that he hastened out of the inn. It seemed rather a strange proceeding, but I was well accustomed by this time to my odd companion, so I forthwith went to change my travelling dress.

A quarter of an hour had not elapsed when Thornton came into my room in a very excited state, and threw himself down into a chair.

"Halloa! what's the matter now?" I said, as I saw him bury his face in his hands, and burst into a flood of tears.

After a little time he somewhat recovered, and told me that he had heard very bad news.

"I promised you, some time ago, Harrington, that I would tell you how I came into that place—Boulogne, I mean—"

"Don't trouble yourself about that now, Thornton. Shall I ring for something?"

"I'm all right, now, Harrington; and it'll do me good to tell you the whole affair: you will be able to give me some advice, then. So have a little patience, there's a good fellow."

"Before I went away from England, I fell in love with the most beautiful girl that I have ever seen. I asked her father's consent to marry her, but he refused me, saying that my poverty was the great bar to my happiness. If I had been the eldest son he might have thought about it. My temper was always very quick, and I called him "sordid," and many other insulting terms, which I bitterly repented of—the consequence being that I was no longer allowed to see his daughter. Then I felt what it was to be poor—and it might be years before I could get even a moderate income; for I was then preparing to go to London, for the purpose of studying the law. My father had given me money to pay all expenses of the first year I determined, instead of using it for what he intended, to take a passage out to Australia, and try

my fortunes at the diggings—for I had heard great accounts of them. I only told one of my father's servants what I was going to do, so that he might tell him when I had gone. The day before I went I wrote to Clara Over—”

“What!” I exclaimed, interrupting him in my astonishment, “and are you Winfred Manvers?”

“Why, how did you know my name?”

“My promise does not bind me in this case,” I thought, and I gave him the whole account which I had heard, not omitting the pleasing news of Clara Overbury's convalescence.

We deemed it necessary that I should go over to Manvers' Hall first, and break the news of his return.

I was shown into the drawing-room, and, a few minutes after, Sir Charles Manvers came in—a very old, grey-headed gentleman, and rather eccentric.

“Pray be seated, my dear sir,” he said, as I rose upon his entering, “pray be seated; and so I suppose you have come to dinner.”

“If you will allow me to—”

“Stay? of course I will. Something original! I like something original; therefore—” Eh? ”

“You misunderstand me, sir; my business is entirely different,” I said, rather surprised.

“Business, oh?—those rascally poachers again! Come into the library. No later than last week I got that Timothy Saunders sent for trial.”

“Pardon me, you have entirely mistaken my business,” I said; “I have not come about poachers.”

“Do you mean to call me a liar under my own roof, sir?”

“Indeed, my dear sir, you have mistaken me altogether.”

“Don't labour under such a delusion. I never mistake people—in fact, I'm a very good judge of human nature.”

“You had a son, Winfred, I believe?”

“Yes, indeed; and another, Thomas.” I saw a tear twinkle in the old man's eye. “But poor Tom died, and Winfred was murdered—now, don't dispute the subject. I'll believe it to my dying day. I told my wife so before she died—and so I'm childless.”

“But consider, he may be living. You must recollect his body was never found.”

“Ah! I wish he were. But come, we'll see about these poachers.”

“Supposing he is, and that you could see him,” I said, hoping to dispel the poaching mania from his brain.

“Do you think there are any hopes?” he said, eagerly; and drew his chair nearer to mine.

“Yes, I—”

“God bless you!” and he caught hold of my hand and wrung it nearly off.

“If you are calm, I think you might see him, perhaps—perhaps, say to-night.”

I can as little describe the interview which then took place in my sight, as I can describe that which I did not see, and which occurred some little time after. I only know that somebody came in haste from Florence; that Thornton introduced me to a young lady who was even fairer than my expectations; and that he afterwards wrung my hand, saying, “You were quite right, old boy: I was a child, hasty and thankless; but God has taught me my lesson, and now gives me my reward.”

H. W. A.

WILLINGNESS.

“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.”

HE nature of man is a blended fusion of parts seemingly different, if not opposite, in their character and qualities, but all so fitly joined together by their heavenly Maker as to form, when united, one harmonious whole. The affections, the intellect, and the will are all so linked together in the production of every act of man, that it is only a philosophic analysis that can detect the portion of the act which is due to each; and in most cases the distinction remains, after all, nothing more than a speculative abstraction.

All the different forces of our nature blend their tendencies together, and the course of action pursued is the result of their commingled influence. But all the parts which make up the inner constitution of man gravitate towards a common centre, whose power is felt by all, and which exercises a

controlling influence over the direction of each; and that centre is *the will*.

Never does philosophy delude itself with more unreal dreams, than when it fondly imagines it can turn the prying eye of intellect to scrutinise with cold and unimpassioned gaze some subject intimately connected with *our life and practice*. We may imagine that we are viewing the subject in the clear, uncoloured rays of pure reason; but the will imparts a hue to every line, a tint to every shade, and falsifies the whole result, if her influence be not taken into consideration.

Many a strange and apparently inexplicable phenomenon in the history of religious thought may be satisfactorily accounted for by thus taking into consideration the influence of the human will and the human heart. The weak believer is sometimes perplexed, when he beholds one of lofty

attainments and gifted powers, eminent in every branch of learning, but a sceptic in religion; and gloomy doubts disturb the calmness of his persuasion, when he perceives the strange results at which minds of a superior order sometimes arrive, and, apparently, in their honest search after truth. Alas! he little knows the mighty power of *will*. The case of religion has never received from such a man a candid and impartial hearing. When summoned to the bar of his understanding, it met with such treatment as an innocent man receives when he comes before a hostile jury. A partial and a biased will sat there in judgment upon all its proofs; and its clear, honest, and convincing evidences were received with suspicion and dislike, and, since they ran counter to all the darling desires of the heart, and the previous bent of the disposition, they were speedily thrown out of consideration altogether. And in other cases where an inquiry into the evidences has been entered on, it has been with a lurking wish that the examination, after all, might prove unfavourable. In such circumstances, the wish biasses the judgment, and the inevitable result is, that the man can never believe to be true what he wishes may be false. And in the way of mere natural sequence no other result was possible.

But the laws of natural sequence are part of the great economy of the Moral Governor of the universe; and the moral fitness of none of His laws commends itself more to the inner nature of man than that which hides God's truth from him alone who comes to examine it with a wilfully prejudiced mind, and a heart determined to be uninfluenced by it. Should any be left to grope in darkness after things divine, and miss the path which leads to light, our whole moral nature proclaims the fitness of such judicial punishment being inflicted on the proud, sneering, self-sufficient philosopher,—on the wilfully prejudiced and the determinedly blind. And should the light of heaven be vouchsafed to any human soul, that same moral nature attests the fitness of such gracious aid being accorded to the humble and sincere inquirer after truth, to him who honestly endeavours to tread that path of duty which the little light he has points out.

These natural judgments of the human mind our Saviour stamps with the approbation of Heaven in the memorable words: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Which words, however of our English version hardly express the full import of the *εάν τις θέλῃ* of our Lord's declaration, which rather mean, "If any man is willing—is really anxious—is sincerely desirous to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

This is the key which opens up and explains

the dark enigma of religious scepticism. Inclination has nothing to do in making us either receive or reject the evidence placed before us on a purely scientific subject. There is nothing in these abstract speculations to interest, or to rouse into action, any other than the merely intellectual part of our nature. But the case is very different in the reception or rejection of moral and religious truth. Here there is no part of our nature uninterested. The issues to be tried are such as affect our life, our conduct, our daily practice; and the influences to be felt are such as must penetrate to our will, our thoughts, our affections, and our desires. In the examination of such a subject, inclination has much to do, and the position taken up by the will is of paramount importance; for an enlightened belief depends upon evidence; the force and effect of even the clearest and strongest evidence depends very much on attention; and attention is a mental exercise over which the will possesses a complete control.

Hence it results that a man may contract deep moral guilt by *neglecting to attend* to evidence in support of a subject of intrinsic magnitude, and bearing on his highest interest, when once that evidence has been brought before him. "Men's moral probation," says the profound Butler, "may be whether they will take due care to inform themselves by impartial consideration, as well as afterwards, whether they will act as the case requires upon the evidence which they have." The first faint presumptions in favour of religion, if not so many demands on the belief of man, are, at least, so many demands on his attention—so many calls to an earnest search after God and his ways; and they lay upon us a most imperious obligation to rouse ourselves to the examination of the subject, and to prosecute the study of its evidences with all fairness and honesty of purpose, and with a firm resolve that its proofs shall have their due influence upon us as far as they are known.

This is the spirit in which we must approach the consideration of religion; and it is a spirit which it is morally incumbent on every child of man to entertain on the subject. There is no human soul which has not been visited by some thought on the subject of religion, and one single such thought should reclaim him to seriousness and attention, and lays on him a moral obligation to seek out each further trace and manifestation, and to follow each intimation afforded him: for it is as real an imperfection in the moral character, not to come to the light where we know it shines,—not to come to learn where true knowledge can be found, as to despise that light, and to reject that knowledge, when they at length force themselves upon our reluctant consideration.

The whole analogy of our probation state here below should lead us to expect that, on the subject



(Drawn by J. D. WATSON.)

"—his trusty page
Took the glad monarch in his arms."—T. 443.

of religion, the Author of Revelation would not at once pour into the mind an overpowering flood of light, which would at once force our conviction and compel our assent, and leave no scope for any virtuous exercise or vicious neglect of the understanding, in examining, or not examining into the evidence. "The evidence of religion not appearing obvious may constitute one particular part of some men's trials, in the religious sense." And this evidence, however dim and obscure it may seem to them, *does* put them into a state of religious probation, and as much affords scope for right and wrong behaviour as anything whatever does. There is a manner of treatment and a suitable disposition which the subject, however veiled in doubt, requires, and meets with, wherever there is the willing and the ready heart. There is a course of conduct and a disposition of mind which even the mere *credibility* of religion should produce, and which it does produce, wherever there is not some moral obliquity of vision, or some vicious predisposition of the will.

Religion requires a certain moral fairness in him to whom it addresses itself—a certain susceptibility of impression; in short, a willingness to do God's will, and to him is the promise made that "he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Certain talents are conferred on each person, and it is in proportion as he uses them aright that more shall be given him. "He that hath," says our Saviour, "to him shall be given;" that is, he that makes a diligent and right use of the knowledge given to him; he that by its means seeks after God if haply he may find him; he that makes use of all the natural means which are placed within his reach—on him will God confer strength which he possesses not in himself, and aid which earth cannot afford. He that honestly makes use of the little light afforded him by God, and endeavours by its means to seek out the path wherein he should go, he shall receive, emanating from Him who is the source of all light, beams gradually growing brighter and brighter, until at length a golden flood of heavenly radiance shall put to flight every darkened shade, and dissipate every gloomy doubt, which intervened between him and his God.

Such is the gracious promise of the Saviour; and on our own part there is but one simple condition required—a willingness to learn and to do his will; a condition not placed beyond the reach of the humblest, the weakest, the most illiterate: one single requisite, and that within the grasp of all. But it is a condition indispensable to all who would know God's will, and the want of which places the philosopher on a level with the most darkened heathen in the acquisition of Divine truth. It is in this essential requisite that the religious sceptic falls short, and it is in the posses-

sion of it that the humble inquirer surpasses the most gifted scoffer at the truths of religion. But the nature of this requisite must not be misunderstood. Our Saviour demands no blind submission to his teaching, and promises no mystic intuition into his doctrines to each curious experimentalist in religion; but the whole import of his words seems expressed in the simple but consoling promise, that the anxious inquirer shall be led on to see the truth; that he who seeks shall find; that the willing heart shall not be disappointed, nor left to its own unaided endeavours in its search after Divine truth.

Were the condition demanded by our Saviour such as required the performance of a round of outward duties, the weak and the humble might not be on a level with his more gifted brother; but it is not the *doing* but the *willing* that is required; not the execution of a lifeless code of morality, but the sincere wish of the heart—a wish, however, which will manifest itself in a constant endeavour after increased knowledge and clearer light, and in an honest and steady application of all the energies and faculties of the mind to every means of enlightenment placed within our reach. It is only he that hates the light, and whose deeds are evil, that "cometh not to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved;" for it is a fearful truth, that there are some who know the light, but shun and hate its beams.

The Father of Light and the source of all knowledge will leave such to wander blindly in the regions of darkness in which they love to dwell, and confound them in the mazes of their own folly and ignorance.

But He who filleth the hungry with good things; he who will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed—he, too, beholds the first incipient desire to do his will; he marks the earliest faint spark of sincere willingness to be instructed in his ways, even while no mortal eye has yet perceived the glimmering of that little spark, and while yet its genial glow has scarce been felt by him in whose breast it has begun to burn. Darkness and gloom envelope the feeble light now, and clouds of ignorance and of doubt obscure it from our view; but the Sun of Righteousness will arise by-and-by—the clouds shall flee away, the darkness disperse, the mists vanish, and the humble inquirer shall walk in the glorious light of the everlasting truth.

Sometimes still, however, in his moments of profound contemplation, problems which he cannot solve will force themselves upon his attention, and lofty thoughts, which soar into the very heights of essential being, to which man's feeble intellect cannot rise; but faith now comes to the assistance of his drooping reason, and hand in hand they lead him calmly on through life's

journey, content to wait and to hope for the period when the great problems of being shall all be unfolded to his gaze; when he shall behold the beauteous order and regularity of every seeming anomaly, and when he "shall know even as he is known."

Thus, whilst the so-called philosopher, puffed up with the pride of intellect, endeavours to seek out a reason for everything, and, in his vain attempts to transcend the limits of human thought, piles up difficulties of his own making, the poor in spirit are feeding on the sacred truths of religion, with

the unquestioning obedience of love, finding in them the joy and the strength of their souls. Nor is their obedience a blind, irrational one. An evidence more powerful than the demonstrative reasonings of philosophy speaks home to their inmost soul, and a light more pure and steady than the flickering rays emitted by the human intellect shines inward into their minds and penetrates to the profoundest depths of their moral nature, witnessing with evidence irresistible that the truth they obey is heavenly truth, and that the doctrine is indeed of God.

THE SEA-KING.

"**J** WILL not rest me 'neath the trees;
I cannot sleep beneath the grass;
I cannot bear the fitful breeze
Should o'er me in its idlesse pass:

"But I will burrow fathoms down
The green heart of my native deep,
And wear above, as robe and crown,
The ocean, in my kingly sleep.

"And o'er me shall my goodly ships
And gallant navies sweep along;
And I shall hear from loyal lips
The echo of my own wild song.

"And all about me, one by one—
My own true children of the mast—
Shall gather when their course is run,
And anchor in this port at last."

They took their good king at his word;
They bore him far upon the main;
Above him shrieked the wild sea-bird,
The wild waves leaped to him again.

They laid him dying on the deck,
And round him, through the tempest loud,

They watched their noble sovereign wreck,
While parted sail and parted shroud.
But as the tempest stronger grew,
The life grew stronger in his frame;
And "Oh!" he cried, "these waves are true,
For aye the same, for aye the same!

"False knaves, now fling me to my rest,
Or thin brave storm shall shew me ye down."
Each head fell ghastly on each breast,
Each ghastly quailed beneath his frown.

And still the tempest gathered strength,
And Death rode grimly on the wave;
The good ship trembled all her length,
And seemed to leap into her grave.

With sudden hands, his trusty page
Took the glad monarch in his arms,
And plunged untimely youth and age,
As if those seas were maiden charms.

They sank, and, calming in content,
The wind and waves grew wondrous still;
And back those saddened seamen went,
As men who had nor thought nor will.

J. S. W.

DEEPDALE VICARAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARK WARREN."

CHAPTER LXXXV.

THE WEDDING.

ALL the bells were ringing merrily in Deepdale Church. A wedding had just taken place. Dionysius Curling, the worthy vicar, had at length been united to the woman of his choice—to Clara Melrose. It was a very grand event. All Deepdale had been there to see. The imperial countess had graced the ceremony with her presence, and was about to carry the bride and bridegroom to the Manor, where a breakfast had been prepared worthy of the occasion, and of her munificence.

Simon Croskeys, in his Sunday clothes, has given

away the bride; and, if you looked round, you would see Nathanael Lewin, his dense face lighted up with excitement, and you would hear him say, rubbing his hard hand over his eyes, "God bless her! God bless her!"

The three Miss Flushings, and several fair girls beside, have been bridesmaids. Indeed, all the youth and beauty of Deepdale were in attendance upon Clara Melrose! If she had been a queen she could not have had more homage.

"There is nothing we will not do to make it up!" had been the universal cry of Deepdale. And they had been as good as their word.

Mrs. Flushing had taken the old vicarage in hand, and had made it like a fairy palace, so Dionysius

Curling affirmed. And the presents heaped on the bride were enough to furnish it, without anything else. It was as if all the ladies in the village had set to work to make cushions and chair-covers, and hearth-rugs, to say nothing of more substantial presents—of the rosewood table for the drawing-room; of the grand piano; or the lounging-chair for the vicar's study; or the brooch set round with gems; or the shawl, fit for an Indian princess, and which the bride was to be married in; or the ornamental cake-basket of filigree silver, with doves at the top, a gift from the countess: all these things, and far more, came pouring in for Clara Melrose.

Dionysius Curling had gone about, the proudest and the happiest man in the parish. He had a great deal to do. He had dozens of private conversations with Mrs. Flushing. He would have everything done to perfection for his dearest Clara. "Would his dearest Clara like this?" "Was Mrs. Flushing sure she would like that?" At which Mrs. Flushing laughed in his face, and told him she had known his dearest Clara ever since she was born—meaning, since Clara was born.

Dionysius Curling had become a different man to what he was when we first introduced him to the reader. He had outgrown his stiffness and pedantry, and become genial and pleasant. What was better far, he had ceased to preach over the heads of his congregation, and had discarded the use of the word "aesthetics." He was beginning to learn a better lesson than Plato could teach him—a lesson of faith, of hope, and of charity. His sermons were simple and earnest, and his ministry likely to prove a blessing to the people of Deepdale.

Phil was not at the wedding, though he had come home the night before;—just in time, his mother told him, to give the bride away.

But Phil did not wish to give the bride away. He was excessively angry at her being married, and declared—as, indeed, he does to this day—that if he had but spoken out before he went to London, she would have waited for him, and not thrown herself away on Mr. Curling.

Having made this unexpected declaration, Phil rushed from the house, and relieved his mind by turning head over heels at least twenty times! He refused to see the bride, and vowed that he would never speak to her again. But just when the imperial chariot was conveying the newly-married pair to the station, to start for their wedding tour, a voice suddenly called to the coachman to stop, and in another minute there appeared the face of Phil at the carriage window. He flung a bouquet in the lap of the bride, a lovelier one by far than she had yet received.

"Good-bye, Mrs. Melrose!" cried the boy. "I—I wish you may be happy; and I forgive you—God bless you, Mrs. Melrose!" and he disappeared.

"The most extraordinary individual of my acquaintance," said Dionysius Curling to his bride.

And hark! as the carriage disappears, merrily ringing out the bells.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

CONCLUSION.

The fact that Phil was able to perform this act of leave-taking, was a sign that his feelings were recovering their equanimity. And it was time they did. He had an important matter to set at rest that day. He turned his steps to the village street, and marched straight to the red-brick house of Dr. Plume.

Dr. Plume had been, of course, to the wedding, and was now at the Manor, where a numerous party had assembled in honour of the occasion.

There was, however, one person in Deepdale who had not gone either to the wedding or to the Manor. He it was whom Phil wished to see. He wished to see Frank Chauncey.

The boy's face grew thoughtful, even tender, as he opened the door. He opened it quietly, and without his usual noise and clatter. Quietly he walked upstairs. He felt sure he should find Frank, and find him alone. The door of Frank's sitting-room was ajar. Phil pushed it open and entered. All was silent as the grave. Yet Frank was there. He sat at the table, his arms stretched out, and his head bowed down upon them. He did not move, or appear to know that any one had come in. He seemed sunk in profound dejection, if not despair.

Phil closed the door softly, and stole on tiptoe to Frank's elbow. Then gently touching him, he whispered, "Mr. Chauncey!"

Frank started. His nerves were sensitive, and highly strung. He started, and looked at Phil. Then he looked beyond him. It was as if he expected to see some one else—to see, in fact, his father!

This was the one absorbing dread of Frank Chauncey's mind—the dread of being confronted with his father! His face was wan, and changed, and haggard. His eyes were sunk, his hand was wasted. Ah! could this be Frank Chauncey—he who had been so lately young, prosperous, and happy? Alas! indeed it was.

Phil gazed at him a moment. The boy's eyes were filled with tears. His heart, tender as a woman's, for all his rough exterior, melted at the sight of the misery before him.

"Mr. Chauncey," said he, and his voice was soft, almost musical, "why did you not tell me?"

Frank did not answer. Swiftly it passed through his mind what might have happened. Deepdale, in the midst of its rejoicings, might behold as sad a spectacle as any, when Reginald Chauncey was confronted with his son!

"You should have told me," continued Phil, with deep earnestness, and his eyes beaming with compassion. "How could I know that the man who took the money—was—your father?" He lowered his voice to a whisper. Frank turned away, and buried his face in his hands.

"He is taken then," thought he—"taken!"

Phil went close up to him. He put his arm round Frank's neck.

"Dear Mr. Chauncey," said he, and great tears dropped from his eyes, "be comforted. It is not as you think."

Frank raised his head.

"What is not?" asked he, in a fearful, hurried voice.

"He is not taken. He will never be! Dear Mr. Chauncey, this time it is *I* who have let him go."

"You!"

"Yes, because," and the boy's voice became husky and broken—"because he was *your* father."

Frank turned pale as ashes. In another moment he was leaning against the open window, his hand on Phil's shoulder. Phil was supporting him.

Then Phil told him—and it never passed the boy's lips but that once—he told him the result of his journey to London: how he recognised the man he was in pursuit of; how he followed him up; how he brought his crime home to him; how the culprit was completely in his power; how he would have caused him to be arrested, but that he found out the secret; how, for the sake of Frank, he had spared him; how he had made him promise to leave England then and there; how he had never left him a moment, and in the dawn of early morning had seen him on board a vessel about to leave the docks, and bound for Australia; how he saw him for the last time, standing on the deck, waving an adieu with his handkerchief; how Reginald Chauncey was not so disconsolate as might have been imagined, and appeared, as Phil said, to have his pockets lined with money (advanced—but this Phil did not know—advanced on the score of his intended marriage with an heiress); how Phil had kept the secret inviolate, and would continue to do, till his life's end.

What became of Reginald Chauncey was never known. But Frank's subsequent history is soon told. After the marriage of Mrs. Melrose, Phil grew tired of Deepdale. He took his departure for Ireland, intending to reside on his estate there. Frank Chauncey accompanied him, as the medical

attendant—so Phil assured his friends—of the Landons.

"You shall go with me," Phil had said, "whether Dr. Plume likes it or not."

Dr. Plume did not like it, but he was won to acquiescence.

"Perhaps it will be a better opening for him than here," said the old man to himself; "and I ought not to stand in his way."

Before long, Frank's fame as a physician spread far and wide. He gained wealth and honours, and won golden opinions from every one. The momentary aspersions on his character died out at Deepdale, and even Crosskeys was heard to say, that it was mere village scandal arising out of the relations of doctor and patient.

"If he had not promised, you see, the other would never have given him the confession." And Deepdale accepted this version of the story, and took Frank Chauncey back into its somewhat fickle favour.

As for the countess, when some few years had passed, and Dr. Chauncey's name and fame were getting higher and higher, she forgot her old grudge against him. More than this, she remembered that a debt of gratitude was still unpaid. She remembered that his skill had saved her daughter's life; her daughter, whom no solicitations from rank or wealth could induce to change her name or estate—she was resolved to be faithful to the end to Frank Chauncey.

The result of these cogitations on the part of Lady Landon, and sundry delicate manœuvres, was, that Frank paid several visits to Deepdale Manor.

After one of these visits, he did not return to Ireland alone. He brought with him a lovely and much-loved bride. That bride was Lady Lucy.

As for Phil, he became a famous man, and sat in Parliament, and did almost everything that was required of him—except the Latin and the Greek, of which the less said the better.

THE END.

THE HALF-SISTERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DEEPDALE VICARAGE," "MARK WARREN," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

HUSH, Dolores; you are speaking against the providence of God!"

"I only say what is the truth, Helen. I say, this hateful climate of yours is killing him by inches!"

She glided forward, as she spoke, from out the shadow of the old-fashioned chimney-corner. She was a young girl, with dark, flashing eyes, and a profusion of jetty hair. As she spoke, she clenched her hand, and compressed her lips, and knit her brow. Yet it was a sunny face, too—a face that brought with it a feeling of the warm South, and the

orange and citron groves of better climes than ours: for Dolores had been brought up in Spain.

"I wish we had never come!" continued she, pacing the room in an impulsive manner, peculiar to herself. "Papa has pined away ever since, among these horrid fogs, and rain that never gives over! And we have had nothing but trouble and poverty. We were not poor over there!" added she, turning with a quick, almost a fierce, gesture round to Helen.

"It is not the fault of England," began Helen, calmly.

"So you always say," interrupted the other, vehe-

mently; "for you are English to the backbone, and used to living in a fog," added she, with a short laugh, musical in spite of its bitterness; "and you have never seen *my* country, my beautiful Spain!"

"No, I have not."

She said it quietly, and in a tone devoid of the slightest enthusiasm. She was sitting at work by the light of the lamp, her working materials neatly arranged beside her. The room was low and old-fashioned, and seemed as if it were, in reality, the kitchen and nothing more, but that the furniture from the other rooms had found its way thither. Perhaps it was not possible to keep up more apartments than one.

"It is your patience that provokes me, Helen! There you sit, sew, sew, for that abominable woman, and no one hears you complain! I wish you would burst out as I do; I should go mad if I did not!"

And the hand clenched again, and the eyes, brilliant as stars, flashed with excitement. Helen's eyes, clear and sensible, but not brilliant, rested a moment on her half-sister.

"It would be wicked to complain, when Providence has given me the means of earning bread."

"In Spain it is a disgrace and a shame to earn one's bread! And as for that woman——"

"Dolores," said Helen, firmly, and in a tone of authority, "Mrs. Chillingham was raised up at a time when our affairs were desperate. She gave me employment when no one else would. I am thankful to her, and, while my strength is spared, I will do what I can to save us from ruin."

She spoke the last few words in a softened tone, and bent her head over her work. As she did so, a suppressed sigh escaped her. Dolores heard it, and there happened one of those sudden transitions to which her impulsive nature was subject. The fierce passionate look vanished, and the face dimpled over with a smile, radiant as the skies of her own sunny South. Springing forward, she knelt before her sister.

"Helen, I wish I was as good as you are!"

Helen looked up at her. It was that look of patient faithful love, with which many of us are happily familiar. She stooped forward, and kissed the lovely forehead; then said, in her grave, serious tone, "You must not hinder me, Dolores; I have to finish this to-night."

It was a needless injunction, as it happened. Dolores, aerial as a sylph, and wholly uncertain in her moods, was pirouetting round the room, her gossamer scarf floating about her.

"Do you know, Helen, as soon as the summer comes, I mean to take him back to Spain, and you can go, and Joyce, and all of us, and we will leave this tiresome, stupid, rainy, old England, for ever!"

Helen smiled, but made no answer. She did not appear to have much leisure to converse. Yet you could see how, from time to time, she stole a short, quick glance of admiration at her sister. You could see that this brilliant, wayward, captivating creature was regarded like some tropical bird flaunting

its plumes under more sombre skies than its own. Helen was not demonstrative by any means. The outer world thought her too cold and reserved. She was not popular with it. But no more passionate love existed on this earth, than that which dwelt in her heart towards her half-sister.

"She is dearer to me than life!" Helen would say to herself.

Yet, while she said it, not a muscle of her face would change. She would sit plying her needle, as though, beyond the mystery of sleeve-bands, wrist-bands, and neck-gussets, no other idea had entered into her mind.

Dolores seldom touched a needle for any such useful purpose. Yet it was not from want of ability. She could do many things that Helen never attempted. She could paint upon silk, or make wax flowers, as skilfully as anybod. She could play upon the harp, and sing Spanish songs to perfection. Her voice had a richness and a sweetness in it that, once heard, was rarely forgotten. But when we have said this, we have said all.

Helen, in these days, neither played nor sang. She had been taught music, and had even attained some degree of proficiency; but the sterner duties of life pressed heavily upon her: duties which her more brilliant sister contrived to evade.

A short silence succeeded the latter speech of Dolores. It was broken by Helen.

"I hear papa's bell," said she, as a faint tinkle became apparent in the distance.

Dolores ceased her pirouetting, and stood a moment in the attitude of listening. Suddenly, she bounded towards the door.

"Dolores," cried Helen, hastily, "I am very busy, would you take him the beef-tea?"

"What! from the oven—out of that brown pot?"

She had paused when she reached the door, and her flushed, beautiful face was turned over her shoulder with an expression of disgust.

Helen smiled.

"I would not ask you, dear, only I am so pressed for time."

"I could not do it, Helen, for the world! Brown pots always burn my fingers!"

"Then wait a minute, please," and Helen, with a half-sigh, but without the slightest displeasure, laid down her work and rose.

The stove was really nothing more than a cooking-range. Not one of our modern contrivances either; but a simple oven and boiler. Helen opened the oven-door, and took out the despised brown pot, which emitted, it must be confessed, a most savoury odour.

"Dear me! how nice it smells!" cried Dolores, advancing on tiptoe.

Helen was busy pouring the beef-tea into a basin, which stood ready. The basin was on a tray, neatly covered with a white cloth.

Dolores stood watching. She wore a blue net dress with a low body and short sleeves. Her sleeves were looped up with ribbons. A small string of

pearls was round her throat. Her rich hair had a band of gold. Her appearance was out of character with the homely room, the cooking-range, and the eight-day clock; and wholly in contrast with that of Helen.

Helen wore a close-fitting dress, of dark, useful material, relieved only by the spotless collar and cuffs. She looked like the working bee, as contrasted with the butterfly.

"Now, Dolores, carry it steadily," said she, as she put the tray into her sister's hand.

"To be sure I will! On my head if you like! The peasant women in Italy—"

"Please, dear, don't play any tricks!"

"Be easy on that score, Helen, and go back to your Chillingham!"

Helen was doing plain work for Mrs. Hector Chillingham, of The Grove.

A narrow staircase, crooked and dark, led up to the room over the one occupied by the sisters. It, also, was long and low, and had two casement windows, which looked out upon the garden. These windows were curtained with green baize, to exclude every breath of night-air, and the door had a thick stuff curtain drawn across it, for the same purpose. At the further end of the room was the fire-place, at some little distance from which stood a screen covered with a blanket. Within the screen sat the invalid master of the house—the father of the two girls below.

He was not much past the prime of life, and yet the most casual glance would convince you that he had not long to live. The glassy eye, the hectic cheek, the sunken chest, the distressing cough, told their own story—Francis Percival was in the last stage of consumption.

In his face, marred as it was by disease and suffering, you could trace some likeness to Helen. He had not her calm sweet expression, for he was fretful and impatient, and had not, as yet, been disciplined in the school where she was an apt learner. Nor did he care much for Helen. She was the child of his first wife, an English girl, who did not survive the birth of her infant more than a few months. Then he had quitted his native country, and travelled in Spain and Italy. The little motherless child was left behind in England. So that Helen had not grown up with her father; nor, until she was eighteen years of age, had she seen him. When he came back, he was the second time a widower, but he brought with him Dolores. Dolores, the child of his affections, the joy of his heart, the comfort, so he said, of his declining days!

During the many years of banishment from her father, Helen had nursed, in her heart, the most tender love for him. His return had been the one event in her future lot, to which she was always looking. She had been placed at school, and had never known what it was to have a home. When she had ceased to be a pupil, she had become a teacher. But it was a dreary life at best, and Helen's heart was ever yearning towards her absent father.

She had asked to be allowed to go to him, but he had declined: for what reason she never knew; but she loved, and believed in him, just the same.

When they told her he was coming to England, her heart gave a passionate throb of joy. Not that she expressed it outwardly. She had learned to be self-controlled and self-reliant. Perhaps her self-control had become more rigid than it need be, and was likely to be against her. Her unruffled temperament was misunderstood by some. They fancied that she lacked sensibility; but they were mistaken.

As the day approached for her father to fetch her to the home he was about to make in England, Helen scarcely ate or slept. The bliss of such an event was almost too much for her to bear; when alone, she would weep tears of positive ecstasy!

The day arrived. She had put on her best apparel, and decked her face with smiles. Yet she was white and trembling too; her tottering limbs were scarce able to support her.

He had come—the parent! the father! He was to be her protector, her friend, her guide, with whom she was to taste the sweets of filial love, and of domestic peace. He had come. She had been summoned to his presence.

More pale and trembling than ever, with the pent-up emotion of her heart, she walked towards the reception-room of the establishment. She had never been sent for before. She had no friends to receive.

She opened the door timidly, and yet with the courage and energy of a daughter's love striving within her. She wanted to fall on his neck, and kiss him. She wanted him to take her to his heart, and let her be cherished there for ever!

She had wanted cherishing so long! Her heart had pined and yearned so many years of her brief life! And now the thing she had yearned for was come at last!

Her features were as like those of his first wife as could be. The clear grey eye, the plain but sensible features, the voice—it might have been her own. The movement of the girl, as she came forward, was like her mother's. You would think his heart would have opened to her at once. But it did not. Close by him was a radiant creature, throwing all else into the shade. What was this pale, colourless girl, by the side of Dolores? He could hardly recognise her as his daughter.

The look of his face, the touch of his hand, his voice as he addressed her, broke, with one rude shiver, the dream Helen had been indulging so long. She knew, once and for all, that her father did not love her. She had dropped from his heart and his memory as a thing forgotten!

By-and-by, when the shock had passed over, she recovered. She had still the home she had yearned for, and she was of a patient, enduring nature, that gives much, and is satisfied with little in return. She found consolation in fulfilling the duties of a daughter, and of a sister; and, in time, the consolation deepened into a placid happiness. Her father

treated her with but little kindness, for his affections centred in Dolores. He needed no one else, and cared for no one else. Helen took her position as his eldest daughter, but that was all.

After a few such years came sorrow, darkening the abode of the Percivals. Mr. Percival had brought with him some little fortune from abroad, which he was induced to risk in trade. He became partner in a firm in the great manufacturing city about a mile distant. In this city Mr. Percival and his daughters had resided during those early years of his return to England. The firm was unfortunate, and Mr. Percival was slowly sinking his capital, when another evil con-

fronted him. The harsh weather, and well-known fogs of our English climate, sowed the seeds of disease. He could no longer walk backwards and forwards to his place of business; nor could he any longer breathe the vitiated air of the city. He was compelled to withdraw the wreck of his fortune, and retire into the country.

A gable-ended house, picturesque, but somewhat ruinous, stood in the fields a short distance from the city. Here he took up his abode, a broken, down—some said, a broken-hearted man: and some said, too, that he had come here only to die!

(To be continued.)

"GOOD FOR EVIL."

A TRUE INCIDENT.



TN the little town of H——, one winter evening, several men were seated in the parlour of the "Golden Lion," drinking beer, and entertaining each other with stories and jokes, at which they were laughing heartily, when a weary-looking man entered, and modestly seated himself at a side-table. His long beard and peculiar features showed him to be a Jew.

Instead of finding the rest and refreshment he needed after his journey, he was received with rude jests and scoffs; and when at last one of the party (a young carpenter) attempted to set fire to his beard, the poor Jew left the room, and took refuge in the stable with his horse, until his tormentors had dispersed to their homes.

In the middle of the night, when the whole town was hushed in sleep, all were suddenly roused by the sound of the fire-bell. Soon a number of men with buckets of water collected at the spot, and it was found that the fire had originated in a carpenter's shed, and had quickly spread to the adjoining house; and, before the fire-engine could reach the place, the wind, which was blowing strongly, had increased the blaze so much, that the whole house seemed wrapped in flames. The carpenter's wife had escaped at the first alarm, and was standing in the street beside her husband, who seemed stupefied with fright. Their only child, a little girl of four years old, was

still asleep in an upper room, and the mother cried, in a despairing voice, to the bystanders to save her child. But the stairs were already partly burnt away, and no one dared make the attempt, until a stranger, who had been gazing silently upon the scene for a few minutes, suddenly advanced to the house, and by means of an espalier, to which a vine was trained, climbed to the window, and with a powerful hand dashed in the frame and disappeared.

All stood in breathless expectation for a few seconds, when the brave stranger was seen with the child tied to his back by the bed-sheet. Carefully descending the tottering ladder, he placed her unhurt in her mother's arms, and was gone. Shortly after, the upper part of the house fell in with a crash, and all the property and stock-in-trade of the poor carpenter was buried in the ruins.

Early next day, the landlord of the "Golden Lion" came to the house where the ruined man with his wife and child had found a temporary refuge, and said, "The stranger who saved your child has sent you this money (handing him a purse), all he had with him; and do you know, he is the very Jew whom you treated so badly at my house last night?"

Dear children, if you are ever inclined to make sport of a Jew, remember this little story, and rather pity the poor outcast people of Israel, on whom the word of the Lord has been fulfilled, that they should be scattered over the face of the whole earth.

THE "QUIVER" ORPHAN-HOME FUND

(EIGHTH LIST.)